

edward johnson building
faculty of music
university of toronto



WILLIAM AIDE, PIANO

WALTER HALL

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1980

8 P.M.

PROGRAM

Four Fantasies, Op. 116

Johannes Brahms

Intermezzo in E major
Intermezzo in E minor
Intermezzo in E major
Capriccio in D minor

In 1892 Brahms wrote two books of short piano pieces entitled "Fantasien". In common with the other piano works written late in his life, these have an introspective quality and are lacking any sort of virtuosic display. The word "Fantasie" evidently had no particular connotation for Brahms and indeed the individual pieces are given the more neutral names of intermezzo and capriccio. There is little formal distinction between the two for both are primarily based on the three-part song form. As a general rule, however, the capriccio tends to be more rhythmically impulsive and to make frequent use of broken chord figurations while the intermezzi tend to be somewhat calmer.

The four pieces to be heard tonight comprise the second book. The first intermezzo an Adagio, is remarkable for its compactness and for its sparse texture. The result is an intensely emotional work. Brahms' own feeling for the style of the intermezzo may perhaps be summed up in the marking given for the second piece: "Con grazia ed intimissimo sentimento". The third intermezzo opens with a chordal passage noted for its rich harmonies. A more agitato passage in broken chords follows and the opening material is restated. The fourth piece, marked "Allegro agitato" is by far the most tempestuous of the set and makes considerable use of syncopation.

Sonata in D major, Op. 10, No. 3

Ludwig van Beethoven

Presto
Largo e mesto
Menuetto: allegro
Rondo: allegro

This sonata, composed in 1798, was dedicated to Countess Anna Margarete von Browne the wife of a Russian nobleman. It is generally considered to be one of the most mature and most interesting of Beethoven's early sonatas.

The first movement which is in the usual sonata form has two main themes, the first of which, based on the initial four notes of the descending scale, pervades the entire movement and provides in particular an effective link between the exposition and the development. The development itself is rather short but there is an extended coda so that the whole movement is actually quite elaborate.

The second movement is said to have been composed after reading the description of Klärchen's death in Goethe's Egmont. Certainly it is tragic in outlook and is in fact the first slow movement of the piano sonatas to be written in a minor key.

The minuet is very graceful and has a middle section in fugato style; the trio, in G major, is somewhat less interesting.

The finale is a high spirited rondo based on the rising three-note figuration heard in the first two bars. An acquaintance of Beethoven apparently regarded this movement as being very similar to the composer's finest improvisations.

Ballade in F, Op. 38

Frédéric Chopin

The ballades of Chopin are generally supposed to have received their inspiration from the poems of his compatriot, Adam Mickiewicz. The Ballade in F, composed between 1836 and 1839 and dedicated to Robert Schumann, is supposedly based on "The Switez" or "Le Lac de Willis". This poem, which tells of a town being engulfed by a lake, is thus represented by the calm first theme which is followed by a second theme of great dramatic force. This second theme eventually gives way to the dying echoes of the original theme. It seems more likely, however, that Chopin did not regard his ballades as program music but rather as a new genre which required no fixed structure and which could be both lyrical and epic.

INTERMISSION

The Four Scherzi

Frédéric Chopin

No. 1 in B minor, Op. 20

No. 2 in B-flat minor, Op. 31

No. 4 in E major, Op. 54

No. 3 in C-sharp minor, Op. 39

The four scherzi, written between 1831 and 1842, can be considered similar to the traditional scherzo only in their use of triple

meter and in their quick tempi. There is certainly nothing humorous found in them; indeed, the opening of the B minor has been likened to a cry of pain. These initial two chords are followed by an agitated theme which is interrupted by a section in B major based on the Polish Christmas carol "Lulajze Jezuniu". This section leads without pause to the return of the presto section and the work ends with a dynamic coda.

The second scherzo opens with a whispered question which is answered by ringing chords. This work is more lyrical than the first, with the soaring melody of the first section and the expressive motive of the intermezzo.

The fourth scherzo, the only one in a major key, is far less dramatic than the previous three. Perhaps because it lacks their broad effects it is heard less frequently; nonetheless, with its subtle harmonies and beautiful melodies, it deserves equal attention.

The final scherzo on the program was begun in Majorca and finished in Nohant and was dedicated to Chopin's favourite pupil, Adolf Gutmann. The quiet presto opening creates an immediate interest which is fulfilled by the dramatic octave melody. The second section in D-flat alternates chorale-like chords with rapid filigree arpeggios. The first section then returns to bring the piece to its stunning finish.

Notes by Paula Jane Francis

William Aide received his musical degrees from the University of Toronto and the Juilliard School of Music. Mr. Aide joined the staff of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto in the Fall of 1978.

Next Concert: Faculty of Music Alumni Assoc. Benefit Concert,
(Roxolana Roslak, soprano) Walter Hall, 8 pm
February 8, 1980.